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PATRICK BRONTE

Patrick Bronte

BY

JAMES SENIOR



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PART ONE

PART ONE

“The Perfect trinity of highest female fame for England,” writes Swinburne, “is made up of three women, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Emily and Charlotte Bronte. They had intellect, and they had genius, yea, they had

The sweet and virtuous soul

That like seasoned timber never gives,
But when the whole world turns to coal,
Then chiefly lives.”

I

Do you wish to understand an author, study the associations of his birth and youth; study his parentage and home, his education, the times he lived in, and the various influences unto which he was subjected, and he, too, will be seen, in large measure, like you and me, the outcome and victim of the radiance of circumstance.

The trio of the Bronte sisters, do you know them? Charlotte, Emily, Anne.

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Acquaintance with them will increase your reverence for virtue, for duty and for sacrifice.

They are become, the incidents of their lives, and their novels, part of my intellectual equipment; Charlotte and Emily are my imaginative friends; to me, their lives and their novels are all of one, for their novels came out of their lives; their feelings, fresh and deep, and pure and strong, yearned for expression, and that expression hath issue in poetry, and then in novels—"Wuthering Heights," of Emily, the sphinx of English literature, is about the most passionate, intense and weird of all stories I have ever read. Anne wrote two novels; Charlotte wrote four—"Shirley," "The Professor," "Villette," and "Jane Eyre". "Jane Eyre", the masterpiece, is distinctive romance, moving on steadily, with intensifying interest toward a memorable and romantic close; the story of love, the story of two souls, sundered apart first, then knit together strangely into perfect union. And "Jane

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II

Eyre" is love's expression of the soul of Charlotte Bronte—"I would love infinitely, and be beloved."

I well remember reading "Jane Eyre" for the first time. My soul was captivated, and, once its spell was upon me, I could scarce endure to put the volume down until I had read it quite through. Its common effect this, especially in the time, 1847, of its appearance, when novels were not so abundant as now, were more expensive, and when the public taste was not so satiated with fiction as it now is.

Till Charlotte came

Woman's looks,
Were her only books.

By the Fall of the year all London was led captive, in the main against its will, by one, who, knowing little of the conventional ways and thoughts of society, and caring as little for them, writing in a new way and from her own viewpoint, revealed the deeps of human feeling as, till, then, no other authoress had ever revealed them.

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“Jane Eyre” gathered readers and admirers fast. A Jane Eyre fever became epidemic; the story moulded the fashion of the hour, and Rochester airs and Jane Eyre graces become the rage.

Writes Thackeray, to whose genius Charlotte Brontë was devoted, and whom she named as “the first social regenerator of the day,” a Titan in intellect—“How well I remember the delight and wonder and pleasure with which I read Jane Eyre; sent to me by an author whose name and sex were alike unknown to me, and how, with my own work pressing upon me, I could not, having taken the volumes up, lay them down until they were read through.”

III

As patterns of high womanhood, and of a tragic devotion to duty, though in social life shy, reserved, distant, yet as interpreters of the true pure emotion of love, daily are rising in the regard of all lovers of true literature, Charlotte Brontë and

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Emily, the sister. A sure niche in the temple of literary fame is their portion.

Their works are flowers of life that bloomed from the unpromising soil of Yorkshire moors, moors like the bare heath whereon met the witches three of Macbeth; And I, too, did breathe the selfsame Yorkshire air,

And feel with them a kinship thro' the sod;
I have looked on the hills that they deemed fair,
And trod the Yorkshire moors their feet have trod.

And so I am a lover of the Brontes,
They are my friends.

IV

Oft lesser names shine with lustre reflected from a great name. For that Charlotte and Emily are illustrious, Patrick Bronte, the father, wins our interest.

We know his land, the Irish land, the land of Patrick, St. Patrick, the holy youth, whose was the blest fortune to be born to the service of Mary's Great Son.

St. Patrick's day, March 17th. 1777, was

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born Patrick Bronte, at Emdale, in a small cottage; so lowly his home it is now a shelter for cattle. Peasant-born, eldest, biggest boy of a family of ten, nurtured to hardihood and frugality, Patrick had big chores, the biggest, the potato-gathering of the fall of the year, days in the Emerald Isle cold and chilly, rainy and dreary, sleet oft falling, and, following the diggers from dawn to dark went Patrick, young boy,

The little man,

With cheek of tan.

Work hand and foot,

Work spade and hand,

Work spade and hand

Thro the crumbly mold;

The blessed fruit

That grows at the root

Is the real gold

Of Ireland.

V

At fourteen the young Bronte is weaver-boy, and, before long, quite expert in the art of weaving, and supplying the Bronte home with all the blankets and druggets and tweeds that were needed. Patrick

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learned to weave linen and bore his webs to Banbridge, finding there, in those war times, high price and speedy sale.

Prosperity's right hand is industry, and her left hand frugality.

The young youth's prosperity bloomed to a change of occupation.

Hugh Bronte, Patrick's father, had passed thro' strange experiences and could relate stories, some, such as melt the heart to pity, others such as cause the flesh to creep and stir the passion for the weird and wonderful.

Storytelling fosters the love of literature, and Patrick would visit the book-stalls at Banbridge and at Newry. Once he took his web to Belfast, and returned thence laden with books.

'Twere vain to fish without a hook,
You cannot learn without a book.

Patrick learned to weave and to read at the same time, with his book propped up before him.

He did weave with his hands,
And he did weave with his brain,
and the web woven with his brain was more

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pleasing than the web woven with his hands.

Prosperity attended the young weaver. His increased earnings bought him more books, and more than ever is he intent to know and enthusiastic to read.

VI

William Shakespeare, myriad-minded, immortal, still, in the realm of thought and of human sympathy, abideth supreme. Nigh unto him, majestic, cometh John Milton, the gifted organ voice.

And there was Milton, like a seraph strong,
Beside him, Shakespeare, bland and mild.

And over the youthful Bronte came the spell of Milton's Paradise Lost. Patrick read and re-read incessantly, the Poem possessed his soul, and, in the midst of the weaving, he fell into a trance: Lo! in Paradise,

Fast falls the eventide;

The darkness deepens—

Now comes still evening on, and twilight gray

Had in her sober livery all things clad;
Silence accompanied, for beast and bird,

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They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale,
She all night long her amorous descant sung;
Silence was pleased.

Patrick walks with Adam and Eve at
evening-time, in the Happy Garden, and
together with them, under open sky adored
the Maker Omnipotent.

Glad, spell-bound, entranced, is the
young youth.

But the poetry and the dreaming
Made it go ill with the weaving.

PART TWO

PART TWO

Youth's morning is mystery,
The ripeness of its maturity,
The out-growth of its history.

I

Patrick obtained a commission from a Banridge merchant to weave him linen webs of rare fineness. The youthful weaver, highly expert, is prospering, for the reward for fine work was generous. He delays, however, in the delivery of his second web, thereby the merchant is displeased, and placing the microscope over the web, the texture is found to be uneven and irregular in the weaving. Patrick pays penalty in a depreciated price. The young weaver, crestfallen and bewildered, returns home.

Humiliation, like the darkness, reveals the lights of Heaven; the vision splendid the more brightly shines.

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With Othello Patrick could have said,
“I do perceive here a divided duty.”

He will continue his reading upon a new plan; part of each day for reading and part for weaving; he will concentrate now upon the weaving and now upon the reading.

But his heart was in his reading, and when he was at the weaving, Milton's angels bright and angels dark would come wandering by; he would look thereon, and ply his shuttle as in a reverie, to awake soon to find serious defects rolled out on the cloth beam.

Much poetry and much dreaming
Made it go ill with the weaving.

II

Patrick is possessed of the desire to learn, and love of learning is like the sea-wave, which the more you drink the more you thirst; and he would read and cherish visions, as is said of David-Lloyd George, he has always beheld the vision of the great things; cottage-born, that daring Welshman is, at this hour, the Strong Man of a mighty empire.

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Cottage-born, Patrick had ambition, and right ambition's first need, the desire for education, and this he would satisfy first.

Cherish the worthy ambition, and to use strength to help onward the good, to yield the utmost of service, service of hand and service of heart, service of brain and the greatest service of all, the service of a noble character. As is being now said of the great Welshman, "David Lloyd George is himself in a way so wonderful that his service to his country consists in being himself, in giving himself, in expressing himself."

"Be inspired with the belief," this, William Ewart Gladstone's great precept, "that life is a noble calling, an elevated and lofty destiny."

III

Friend and brother wouldest thou find,
Hearts of love around thee bind,
Be thyself a heart of home,
To gentle hearts, hearts gentle come.
Patrick Bronte found the gentle heart
and found it heart of home; he found the

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timely friend. As is the Sun in the Heavens, so is Friendship to our world; 'tis for warmth and light, for encouragement, inspiration, nourishment.

See! 'tis a genial summer's day, and the young boy, in the Emdale fort, lies prone on the grass, his fervor for Milton is upon him, and he reads aloud the admired lines, pausing once-a-while for self abandoned fervid comment; he is musing *Paradise Lost*. He thought himself alone.

Andrew Harshaw, in amused admiration and interest stood suddenly behind the young youth, and, for a while, listened to Patrick's expressive enthusiasm.

Conscious soon of human presence, Patrick, like Satan's angels, up he sprung,

As when men wont to watch
On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake,
and, like them, was abashed and stood,
blushing before the stranger.

Harshaw was kindly and soon won Patrick to conversation, and friendship's mission is begun. Young Bronte opened heart and mind, and spoke of the weaving,

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and spoke of his dreaming of his poetry and of his aspirations. Arm in arm walked the two around Elmdale fort. As Patrick listened to the words sympathetic from his timely friend he felt as if his life had been transformed!

Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart;
so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by
loving counsel.

That spirit of his in aspiration lifts him aloft. The sky is now clear and the earth bathed with the light Divine. The lingering snow of neighboring mountains wears a rosy hue; and in the glen the thrush sang sweetly his song and the lark flooded the skies with the rapture of Heavenly music.

Over Faith all skies are fair

Golden shores will yet be won

Steering toward the setting sun.

IV

Andrew Harshaw was a stickit minister; earnest scholar and godly man, courteous, and held in high esteem. He had much learning but like unto Moses was slow of speech.

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The grace of man is in the mind, sings Cicero, and the beauty of the mind is eloquence. Andrew Harshaw had the grace but to him was denied the beauty of expression; wherefore no pastoral charge fell to him. He then is that serviceable union, the minister-teacher, and taught a little school and cultivated a farm, an affectionate visionary, his eyes oft beholding the things afar.

And poets are dreamers and show visions that come to reality.

One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown:
And three, with a new song's measure,
Can trample a kingdom down.

Oh, blessedness 'tis to minister to youth's young dream.

And Harshaw, for Patrick Bronte did dream ambition's aspiring dream. He taught the cottage-boy free of charge, he lent him books, he taught him to discipline and rule his mind. The weaving went well; gray dawn to dusky eve found him at his loom a-weaving cheerily, cheerily; early and late he is at quiet study, reading

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Ovid and Homer and solving geometrical secrets.

Heart and hand and mind are steadily at work, for the friend to guide is found.

Asked the secret of the success of his life, Charles Kingsley replies, "I had a friend."

No wonder that the minister-author sings,

Can we forget one friend? Can we forget one
face

Which cheered us toward the end?

Which nerved us for our race?

We would not—if we could—forget.

V

David Lloyd George, cottage-born, master-spirit of a mighty empire, of the race of Arthur the King, is son of a village-teacher and helped to his great career through self sacrifice and loyalty of a loving brother. The President of a mighty Republic, master of expression and of a fine integrity of character, hath ascended from the ranks of the teacher.

Teacher! Go work on mind and matter now,
A Master raised to power art thou!

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The teacher teaching is the learner ever learning. Patrick proceeded to teach school. He studied the individual pupil, character, temperament, aptitude; dull pupils he encouraged, capable boys he allured to the higher studies. Lover of learning he communicates the love to his pupils.

Cheerily he pursues his studies. In three years he has mastered all the classical and mathematical volumes of Harshaw's library. Ancient and standard authors he read and re-read incessantly.

"Read, mark, learn and inwardly digest." As Charles Darwin said Charles John Romanes, "Above all things, Romanes, practice the art of meditation." Meditation is the nurse of thought, and thought the food for meditation.

Days of teaching, evenings of learning, the friend's smile and genial encouragement yield the young youth happy hours and the years glide gently by.

PART THREE

PART THREE

O! love is the soul of a neat Irishman,
He loves all that is lovely, loves all that he can,
With his sprig of shillelah and shamrock so green!
For love, all for love, for in that he delights,
With his sprig of shillelah and shamrock so green!

I

Patrick, endowed with a passionate love of nature, expressed himself thro' poetry.

Poetry, the hand that wrings

Music from the soul of things.

Love of nature, fervent and deep, is wont to enkindle to poetry, the breath and finer expression of the hidden beauty of a wonderful world; the enlarging of the realm of imagination. Patrick wrote "*The Cottage in the Wood*," the Art of becoming rich and Happy; he wrote a story, "*The Maid of Killarney*;" he wrote "*The Irish Cabin*," a story of gentle adventure on the Mourne Mountains. Pupils had great glee to copy out and to learn the stories and

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poems of their poet-teacher. In due time is published the volume of Poems by Patrick Bronte. And thus he adorns the title page of his "*Cottage Poems*":

All ye who turn the sturdy soil,
Or ply the loom with daily toil,
And lowly on, thro' life turmoil
For scanty fare, attend,
And gather richest spoil to soothe your
care.
And lovers are given to poetry.

II

Cultivating the intelligence of his pupils, Patrick, youthful teacher, came to the birth, within his own clear bosom, of the pure emotion of gentle love, centering in a damsel with locks auburn as his own. The young youth was true human, and that inly touch came into expression. The response is fervent, and meetings follow. *Helen* was the daughter of a substantial farmer of aristocratic tendencies; and meetings are forbidden. With opposition the flame more warmly glows and meetings continue, and the watch is set, and upon a day the two keep tryst 'mid the

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wheat-stacks; but the converse sweet comes into interruption. The allied brothers, who have lain in wait, declare war and rush upon the audacious school-teacher.

“And there began a strong battle with many great strokes.”

The fiery *Helen*, dread cause of the fray, flew in between and espoused the Bronte's cause with great spirit and vigor. When the storm of battle cleared away, teacher and pupil were deeper in love than ever. Helen's pocket and desk were found full of the “neat Irishman's” love verses, and both claimed the right to follow sweet will —“For what I will, I will, and there's an end.”

But pathetic consequence followed. Bronte was dismissed from his school; he lost his friend, Andrew Harshaw, who upbraided him for gaining unwarrantable influence over his pupil.

Secret meetings of Helen and Patrick went on for some time, but gradually the romance ceased to thrill, and Helen, quite discreetly, abandoned the unhappy youth

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out of place and no prospects : She went off and married an honest farmer, and by and by is joyful matron, and auburn-haired children are in plenty.

III

Find earth where grows no weed, and you may find heart where no error grows. Best o' men are moulded out of faults. Patrick, repentant, returned to his true friend, Andrew Harshaw, admitted his fault and was received once more into favor.

Every morning is a fresh beginning,

Listen, brothers, to the glad refrain,

Take heart with the day and begin again.

By the help of the stickit minister the young youth is now teaching an Episcopal school at Drumballyroney. He is twenty-one years of age. He taught private pupils : he had his school salary. He was industrious, prosperous, studying, teaching, and dreaming, aspiring, an university career his aim.

Native ability without education is like a tree without fruit.

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Eighteen hundred and two, our Irish boy is at Cambridge University, thither helped by the encouragement and teaching of Andrew Harshaw. The friend o' cheer opens, like the Spring-time, all the blossoms of the inward spirit.

Patrick won three exhibitions: he had money saved up; he earns more, coaching fellow students. So, genially, creditably pass four years. He has tasted the sweets of the learned grove, and, in 1806, is adorned with his degree, the B. A., the bay of the learned. He has social position, and enters the sacred ministry, his mission to set forth the glory and magnificence of Christian Truth.

He passes thro' three Curacies; twice he is in sole charge of a parish; finally he is Vicar of *Haworth*, world famous now, sufficiently obscure and remote then; forty years he ministers in Haworth, until 1861, when at four score years and four his labours were all over.

Weaver Irish Boy to English Vicar was no mean upward climb for those early Vic-

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torian days. Industry and the cheer of a friend write the story of his life.

Gather home the lesson of the Pleiades,
that

Climb the heaven, moving slowly, shining still,
Sparkling each distinct, yet reaching each to
each

Filaments fine of iridescent lights, yea and of
fellowship too,

In the spirit of a common celestial journey.

IV

Some two or three years our “neat Irishman” is curate of Weatherfield, Essex, where he meets *Mary Burden*, and each to the other is pleasing, until the obdurate uncle appears! Alliance with an obscure Curate! Not for a moment! And the young lady is spirited away, and the lovers never meet again. Patrick sours somewhat.

Some ten months of 1809 Patrick is Curate at Wellington, Shropshire, and a wonderful woman-hater! The grapes are sour! If for him, why, then for the whole world besides. And he quarrels with an

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old College-friend, a neighboring Curate, for that he had the amazing presumption to become engaged to be married!

Courage, friend, thy time soon will come!

A man may fail, a-wooing, twice,
And the third time may prosper.

V

At Dewsbury, Yorkshire, the ancient parish church, Patrick Bronte is Curate.

When, A. D. 627, *Paulinus*, Roman missionary, visited Britain, 30 years after the benign coming of St. Augustine, he found, already set up, a Cross upon the site of the present parish Church. Christianity was already old in Britain when Roman missionaries touched her shores. The site of the ancient Cross became a center of Christian light and Christian life. And thousands at the hands of the good Paulinus were baptized into the Strong Name of the Trinity. Thus were ingathered pagan Saxons to the bosom of Holy Church.

Two years is Patrick, Curate at Dewsbury. So our hero finds home 'mid Yorkshire folk,* rugged, brusque, aggressively

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independent, possessed of a grim humor, withal kindly, loving much and loving long when once their hearts were won.

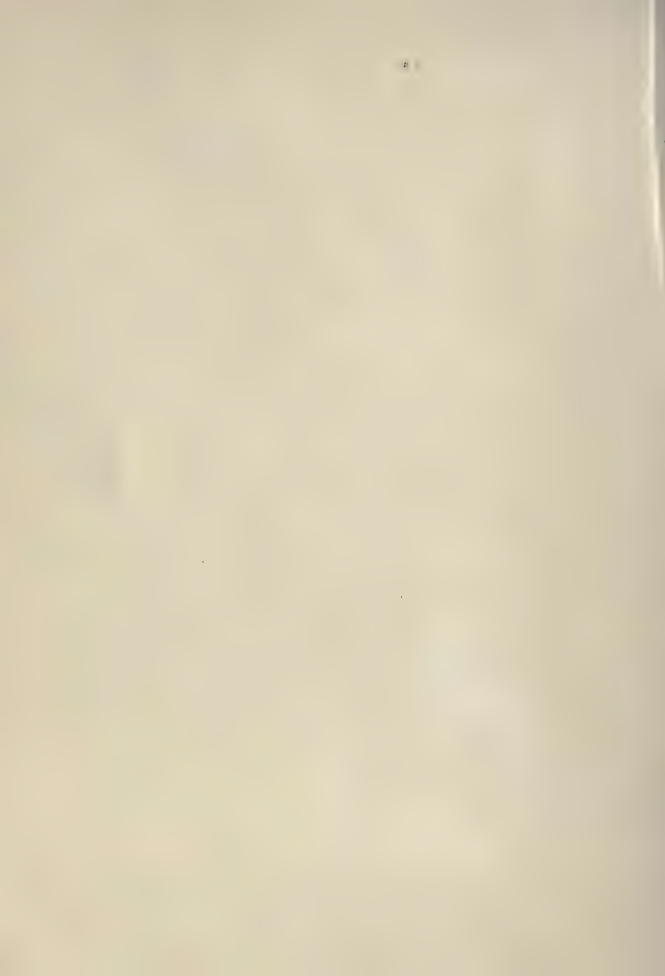
Patrick made way 'mongst them, in spirit kindred with them, for he was soon recognized as of strong mind, true courage and of a Christian manhood. The "neat Irishman" became a true Yorkshire man and in him may be discerned the sources of the strength and vitality of the genius of the Bronte sisters.

The Reverend Patrick Bronte was handsome, tall, well formed, of almost classic features; enthusiastic, retaining still the happy faculty of adoration, responsive, sensitive to winning ways and gracious features.

As minister in holy things, the Curate has the high regard of all, loving the Sunday School and to catechize the children, holding cottage meetings, a center of spiritual influence.

Eccentricities! he had them, and loved plain living and honest oat-meal.

PART FOUR



PART FOUR

With his sprig of shillelah and shamrock so green !

I

Oh, for the Irishman and the shillelah !
And the Reverend Patrick Bronte carried
the shillelah, and merry friends called him
“Old Staff.” And a rugged Staff was he,
independent and free and bold ; bold, bold,
everywhere bold.

Upon a day see him walk along the bank
of the river Calder, the river in flood ; rain
had fallen heavily ; as boys will, a number
were together amusing themselves upon
the river’s brink—among them a youth
half-witted—him they teased, and, giving
him too hard a push, to the dismay of all,
he fell into the whirling waters and was
soon battling for life.

Shouts and shrieks won the young
Curate’s ears. He was soon, and no swim-
mer, in the midst of the swiftly-flowing

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flood, and the boy was gathered from a watery grave.

Courage mounteth with the occasion.

II

The neat Irishman with the shillelah can contend, too, with turbulent man!

Whit-Monday, in Yorkshire, is a great day for Sunday Schools; it is Processional Day. Sunday School scholars assemble in Churches or Schools, hold a brief service, then, forming in line, two and two, they so march in happy Procession thro' the principal streets of the town,

Light-hearted and gay

Are they,

As they move along the way.

They return to the school-room and eat currant buns and drink hot tea, a merry day! They then adjourn to a field, scatter, and for the rest, enjoy the day, teachers and pupils, in such games as young folks love.

Following ancient custom, pupils and teachers assembled at the Parish Church of Dewsbury upon Whit-Sunday. The

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brief service ended, the Procession is formed, girls and their teachers first, then the boys and their teachers; so merrily they march thro, the principal streets of the town, and proceed to a village, Earlsheaton, upon a terraced hill-side overlooking the town, thence to the Town Green. They halt and sing Hymns—Yorkshire folk call this “The Sing.”

The Reverend Patrick Bronte is in charge of the Procession.

The scarp of the hill reached, the town and beautiful winding Calder Valley present an attractive panorama, and the landscape was enjoyed by all, bright sunshine over all.

The Procession went merrily on.

And what is this? The Procession comes to a confused halt! An interruption!

A tall strongly-built man (notorious boxer, drinker) stands, arms outspread before the column, and with foul words, bids the girls turn around and go back to Dewsbury. He will block the way; and there are cries of alarm!

But “Old Staff,” the alert young Curate,

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is soon at the front. Prompt as a flash, he seizes the ill-conditioned fellow by the collar and hurls him to the side of the road whence he came. Muscular Christianity fulfills its mission, and the Procession moves on. The Hymns are sung upon the Town Green and the day comes to its close in peace.

Charlotte Bronte has put this rustic episode into that breezy Yorkshire novel of hers, called "Shirley."

The Curate of a neighboring Church, Sabine Baring-Gould, it was who wrote for the Church universal, the world-famous Hymn,

Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war,
With the Cross of Jesus
Going on before.

And the purpose of the Hymn was to sing it, while the children marched from the village to the next village, to participate with Sunday School children there in the Whit-Monday festivity, and so to increase joy.

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III

When St. Augustine and forty companions, sent by the Bishop of Rome, A. D. 397, reached Britain, Christianity was already ancient in the land. Within the first two centuries of the Christian era hundreds of Churches, to the worship of the Lord Christ, had been erected in the island, some in the distant wilds of Scotland.

In the trading ships from Mediterranean cities went godly men who told to Britons how that Christ had died and would win men unto Himself. British soldiers who had fought against the Romans were taken prisoners to Rome. There they learned and took back the story of Jesus Christ. Christian Roman soldiers, too, there must have been.

Thus early shone Christian light in Britain. St. Alban, A. D. 303, is the first British martyr. Thro' Irish and Scottish and Roman missionary effort, Churches increased and multiplied—they have con-

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tinued to increase—and the land is possessed of them.

With the Church hath constantly been the Church-tower and the Church-going bell; many Churches have the chimes of bells—

The sweet Church bell
Peals over hill and dell,

Jesus Christ be praised—and from of old these have been rung by hands of stalwart men of the parish. Each Lord's Day ring gladsomely out the bells, the bells,

Come to worship,
Come to praise,
Come to prayer.

Solemnizing and inspiring 'tis to listen to the chiming and pealing of the bells.

IV

Large bells are first mentioned in the Chronicle of the Venerable Bede, A. D. 670; and the first peal of bells that we hear of is a peal of six bells in the Abbey of Croyland, A. D. 870, and each bell was given its name.

Anciently each bell was consecrated be-

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fore being raised to its place in the Tower, and received the name of a Saint or Martyr, and had an inscription placed inside, such as,

Ave Maria ora pro nobis,
St. Joseph, pray for us.

With the Reformation such inscriptions ceased, and the founder's or donor's name is inscribed, with some rhyme or sentiment, such as

Repent, I say, be not too late,
Thyself all times ready make.
Let us all sound out,
I'll keep my place no doubt.

The ringing and chiming of the bells was considered effective to still storms. The sounding of the bells would disperse evil spirits.

I call the Living—I toll the passing—
I mourn the departed—I break the Lightning
Thus the Bell!

And we hear of the evening bells; of the mellow wedding bells, Golden bells; and Charles Lamb sings of

The Bells, the music nearest Heaven.
And the ancient Parish Church of Dews-

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bury had its peal of bells and its stalwart company of the bell-ringers.

V

We have *holidays* now, but scarcely have we *holy days*. In the Bronte days Sunday was true *holy day*. The day most calm, most bright, the light celestial of all the week, and streets were thronged with the Church-going multitude, to whom

When bells did chime,

‘Twas angels’ music,

The bonny Christ Church bells.

Now bell-ringing is a fine art, requiring practice and skill, and bell-ringing contests were wont to be held.

‘Tis Sunday evening, service ended, and the Reverend Patrick Bronte sits in his study for quiet rest; and not for long.

Evening bells have summoned to worship and the Church was left quiet; and lo! the bells ring out a merry peal! and ring and ring, busily ring! for the amazement of the Curate.

A bell ringing tournament was approaching, and, the Vicar being away, the

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bell-ringers grasped opportunity for a practice-peal, even upon the Sabbath, at evening-time.

But the neat Irish Curate is near-by. Seizing his trusty shillelah, afire with virtuous indignation, he reaches the parish clerk's house. "What is the meaning of the bell-ringing?" "Tomorrow is the bell-ringing contest; and they're practicing."

Such unheard-of sacrilege! this is Sabbath desecration! and with speed, Patrick Bronte ascends the winding stairs of the Church Tower, and with flourished shillelah, is soon in the midst of the astonished bell-ringers. This display of force and fiery indignation, joined with reverence for the sacred ministry is sufficient and the Bell-tower is soon purified of the noisy bell-ringers, sacrilegious miscreants!

VI

Laughter, like a chime of bells, must ring true to season, true to occasion.

Like Peter, the impulsive, who fell at the mirth of a maid, Patrick Bronte is keenly sensitive.

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Upon a certain Lord's Day, the Curate officiates at Hartshead, miniature Church upon the hill-top. At evensong he is arranged for service at Dewsbury, since the Vicar would spend the evening at a friend's house, a family gathering.

Returning, clouds gather, thunder roared, lightning flashed and rain torrential fell and the Bronte clothing is flooded. Mr. Bronte reached the friend's house, meeting at the door the Vicar's friend. Since he is so drenched thro' the Curate asks, "Will the Vicar officiate?"

With broad grim Yorkshire humor, the gentleman exclaims, "*What! keep a dog and bark himself?*" The shaft of ridicule pierced home! Mr. Bronte turned speedily away, found his rooms and changed clothing. That night he conducts, with perfect self recollection, the service of Evensong and preaches the farewell sermon! To the wonderment of all, the Curate announces that thence he'll preach no more. Flagrant insult is the occasion of his resolution. His sermon is mightily effective; he had rapt attention; and the Reverend Patrick

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Bronte kept his word. Faithful to all holy duties else, parish visitation, Sunday School and all besides; the Vicar must do all the preaching.

The heart that's soonest awake to flowers
Is oft the quickest to be touched by thorns.



PART FIVE

PART FIVE

Greatness in the children lends luster to the
father

I

Hartshead-Cum-Clifton, small village upon the hill-top melting gradually away to an extensive table-land, has a tiny church dedicated to St. Peter. The Reverend Patrick Bronte is appointed Curate-in-sole-charge of the little parish and Church.

Friendship brings brides, and, we have the assurance of Touchstone,

“As a walled town is more worthier than a village, so is the forehead of a married man more honorable than the bare brow of a bachelor.”

The Reverend William Morgan, Curate of a neighboring Church and friend of Mr. Bronte, is occasional visitor in the home of Mr. John Fennell, Headmaster of the Woodhouse Green Wesleyan Academy, and becomes engaged to Jane Fennell, the

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Headmaster's daughter. The friend brought Mr. Bronte into visiting terms at the Wesleyan Academy.

Meanwhile, for prolonged stay in the Headmaster's home, comes a gentle little lady Maria Branwell. And Maria Branwell and the Curate of Hartshead "changed eyes."

"Happy the wooing that's not long doing." Patrick's wooing won, and won soon. "Give all to love; obey the heart." And the dear lady's love-letters are all preserved; they were but nine, for the days of the wooing were brief. Thirty-eight years later Patrick Bronte handed to his daughter Charlotte a "little packet of letters and papers," her mother's love letters! And the precious letters are in print! Precious memorials to Charlotte, the daughter, they were; at five years of age her mother was taken from her. Charlotte read the letters, she tells us—

"In a frame of mind I cannot describe. It was strange now to peruse for the first time, the records of a mind from whence my own sprang; and most strange, and at once sad and sweet to find that mind of a

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truly fine, pure and elevated order—
There is a rectitude and refinement, a
constancy, a modesty, a sense of gentle-
ness about them indescribable. I wish
she had lived and that I had known her.”

The wedding day was December 29th.
1812, and truly remarkable, for it was a
trio of weddings, three bride-grooms,
three brides!

The two Curate-friends are married to
the two cousins, and in this wise:

the Reverend William Morgan joined
in holy matrimony Patrick Bronte and
Maria Branwell; then, congratulations
ended,

the Reverend Patrick Bronte joined in
holy matrimony William Morgan and Jane
Fennell;

and, upon the same day, in far away
Penzance of Cornwall the sister of Maria
Branwell, Charlotte, was joined in holy
matrimony to a happy bride-groom.

And the marriages three were “pro-
foundly happy,” and the Bronte marriage
gave luster to English literature and made
the name of Bronte immortal.

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“Jane suits me: do I suit her?” asks Mr. Rochester of Jane Eyre in Charlotte Bronte’s great novel; and Jane replies, “To the finest fibre of my nature, sir.”

There’s the—

Love that hath every bliss in store;

‘Tis friendship, and ’tis something more.

Each other every wish they give;

Ever to know love is ever to live.

Two children at Hartshead are given to them, Maria and Elizabeth, and these were but visitants, their earthly period soon over.

For recreation Mr. Bronte turned to poetry. He publishes two volumes of poems and a story, “*The Cottage in the Wood.*”

This wins our interest and suggests the source of the literary passion of the Bronte daughters; it is a fervor inherited and cultivated.

II

What happiness to reign a lonely king

Vext.....vext with waste dreams!

Thus reflects Arthur the King, after that he has seen Guinevere, and to Merlin he

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exclaims, "This damsel is the most valiant and the fairest lady that I know living, or that ever I could find." And the coming of Guinevere is the entry of high romance into the life of the King and in her train comes the Round Table and the Knights, the famed one hundred and fifty.

So with the entry of Maria Branwell into Patrick Brontë's life begins the bloom of that life, the foundation of the Brontë home and the fame of the Brontës.

Thornton, a few miles distant, is the next Brontë sphere of labor, the home of worship known as the Old Bell Chapel; thither the Brontës come in the year 1815. Here in successive years are born the rest of the Brontë children, Charlotte, Patrick Branwell, Emily, then Anne, the gentle, aimiable Anne, not illustrious at all, but openly winning and attractive, of an alert expressive sympathy—and the Brontë family circle is complete, children six and one boy of the circle—one sole pathetic shadow for complete family bliss, the frail figure and fragile health of the Brontë mother.

Upon the family at home depends the

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character abroad; and the school is the enlarged family, scholars the lengthening shadows of teachers.

The family is like a book—

The children are the leaves,
The parents are the covers
That the protective beauty yield.

Thornton, amid hills is situated, bleak and wild, compassed about with long, low moors, dark with heather, shut in narrow valleys and flowing water brooks, mills and scattered cottages climb the hillsides or lie settled in the vale beneath. 'Tis for the imagination poetic to gild the scene.

But the love of man would do this. And the Yorkshire folk were, as 'twere, a reaction of the landscape, rugged independent, conscientious, religious, attentive to the Church-going bell and circling social life all and about Holy Church.

During five years, we are sure, the Reverend Patrick Bronte, at Thornton, was a living sermon of the truths he taught and the Bronte home the radiance of Christian light and life.

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III

Upon a day, in the year of our Lord, 1820, February 25, a lumbering procession of some seven or eight country carts is moving over the road that winds, the four miles, over the hills from Thornton to the unique and remote hamlet of *Haworth*. The country parson's household goods and family are moving to their final and permanent earthly home, to Haworth.

Haworth's a place that God doth own,

With many a sweet smile.

But its glory is the halo of romance, for 'tis a rugged village that straggles its cottages, factories, schools, Churches along a narrow and precipitous valley and up the eastern and western hillsides. Factory Chimneys towering aloft, like minarets industrial, summon the faithful. Come to work, yield hands to labor. Today Haworth is industrial, busy, in touch with the throbbing speedy life of the great world. In the Bronte days it was remote, secluded, aloof, far from railroad and the busy stir of life.

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The charm and attraction of Haworth are the moors, the widespreading moors.

“North, west and south they are to be found—immense stretches of heather on almost every side, crowning nearly every hill, far and near, reaching apparently into infinity. Nor tree nor shrub is in view. The soil is thin, poor, scanty; trees could not live on these heights; their roots would find no nourishment, nor could they face the blasts of autumnal and winter storms.”

“There is always fresh air on the moors; pleasant life-giving invigorating breezes are found there even on hot summer days, when the air is stagnant and stifling in the valleys; in winter the winds blow over them, strong and keen. The moors breathe liberty. On them the thoughts go free. They fascinate; and over those who frequent them most, falls a strangely mysterious and magic spell. The moors are calling them, and they are under the charm.”

The Brontes loved the moors.

“I dreamt once,” writes Emily Bronte, “that I was in Heaven, but it did not seem to be my home, and I broke my heart with

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weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights, where I awoke, sobbing for joy."

IV

Luster to the father! This, the great names, Charlotte Bronte, Emily Bronte, together with the gentle Anne, quiet shining star, give to Patrick Bronte; subdued glitter is to him for that Charlotte Bronte wrote greatly, wrote *Jane Eyre*, *The Professor*, *Shirley*, *Villette*; Emily wrote the weird and thrilling *Wuthering Heights*: and Anne wrote two gentle novels.

Lyric and heroic souls, all three, pioneers for the freedom of the human spirit and for woman's wider liberty of expression. Sings Emily, the sphinx, Emily ever aloof, dwelling alone:

And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me
Is, Leave the heart that now I bear,
And give me liberty,
With courage to endure.

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V

Strange! Patrick Bronte survived his wife and all his children, living on till his years were four score years and one.

Three thousand visitors a year have repaired to the Bronte home, the Bronte Church, and the Bronte museum of that moorland town of Haworth, Haworth of the wide spreading moors.

And the most prized of all memorials to the Bronte genius and to the Bronte name is the gift of an American citizen. And this is in the expressive form of a stained glass window in the Parish Church of Haworth, where, for forty years the Bronte father ministered in holy things.

And the memorial reads,

“To the Glory of God

And the pleasant memory of Charlotte
Bronte,

By an “American Citizen;”
and many an humble devotee to the Bronte
genius, visiting at that Yorkshire shrine,
has murmured gentle prayer,

“God bless that American Citizen.”

THE END

Bronte, ~~Strick~~ 172663

Author Senior, James

Title Patrick Bronte.

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M. E. O.

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~~A. D. W.~~

